

JAN 27 1971

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WE

Vietnam Allies Begin Truce To Mark the Lunar New Year

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Jan. 27 (Reuters)—United States and South Vietnamese forces began a 24-hour truce last night in observance of Tet, the Vietnamese and Chinese Lunar New Year.

Allied troops were reported either confined to barracks or stationed in defensive positions as the civilian population began celebrations bidding farewell last night to the Year of the Dog and welcoming today the Year of the Pig. The ceasefire was scheduled to end at 6 o'clock tonight (5 A. M. Wednesday, New York time).

As the allied observance began, the four-day truce announced by the Vietcong in observance of Tet was in its 18th hour. In the first three hours, according to the South Vietnamese command, enemy troops violated their own truce five times, killing 6 persons and wounding 25.

Allied military spokesmen said they expected the enemy to stage mortar and terrorist attacks during the observance of Tet, but not any major assault such as the one in Saigon and other South Vietnamese cities in 1968.

Explosions in Pnompenh

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Special to The New York Times

PNOMPENH, Jan. 26 — Two explosive charges went off in downtown Pnompenh this afternoon, injuring four civilians, including a 3-year-old boy in his father's arms.

The explosions, caused by hand grenades that may have been thrown from the same motorcycle, appeared to add to the atmosphere of uneasiness here on the eve of Tet. The holiday is not celebrated here outside the Chinese and Vietnamese communities.

At the same time some mortar and small-arms harassment by enemy forces was reported on the edge of the city, and there were said to have been several enemy attacks elsewhere in the country.

city since Friday morning, when enemy saboteurs slipped into the airport under cover of a mortar and rocket barrage and blew up fifteen aircraft.

Today's explosions went off at about 5 P.M., just as residents were rushing home to be off the streets by the 6 P.M. curfew, enforced for the first time yesterday.

According to a witness, a man wearing a military fatigue jacket, civilian trousers and sunglasses and riding a blue and white motorcycle without license plates tossed a grenade into a passing bus on a store-lined street opposite the Olympic Stadium downtown.

The bus driver or his assistant, who were reported to be the only ones in the bus, quickly threw the grenade out. It landed near a parked truck and exploded, injuring a father and his young son on the sidewalk and another child nearby, who were all hospitalized. The motorcyclist escaped.

At about the same time, several blocks away, a motorcyclist—perhaps the same one—threw some kind of explosive charge, presumably also a grenade, into the street, wounding a nearby cyclist in the foot. The terrorist escaped.

Also today, the Cambodian Government, displayed to reporter the 17 Vietcong and North Vietnamese prisoners it has offered to exchange for the 17 journalists missing and presumed captured by enemy forces in Cambodia. The enemy is reported to have rejected any exchange.

Americans Reported Seen

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26 (AP)

—A radio report by Don Webster of the Columbia Broadcasting System said this morning that he had seen several Americans at Pnompenh airport carrying weapons, wearing combat boots but otherwise dressed in civilian clothes."

The report brought new denials by Nixon Administration officials that the United States had ground troops or advisers in Cambodia.

Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird told reporters that the only United States military personnel in Cambodia at the time were 16 members of the military equipment delivery team assigned to the American Embassy in Pnompenh Jerry W. Friedheim, a Defense Department spokesman, said the Pentagon was checking the Webster report.

Mr. Webster said that the Americans he saw were picking up several helicopters that had escaped damage in last Friday's raid on the airport. They hauled the aircraft away, he said, with larger helicopters.

Although more terrorist incidents were expected in the capital in the coming days, military spokesmen said the best intelligence available indicated the enemy was not preparing any major assault on the capital.

Meanwhile, in an unannounced visit, President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam flew to the large South Vietnamese naval and marine base at Neak Leung in Cambodia, about 40 miles southeast of Pnompenh on the Mekong River, to greet his country's troops on the eve of Tet.

The explosions this afternoon were the fifth and sixth in the